

# 1. Academic Policies on Disabilities

Converse University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the non-discrimination requirements of Section 35.107 of the Department of Justice regulations. Converse does not discriminate with regard to race, color, sex, national or ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, religion or disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. As a recipient of federal funds Converse recognizes its responsibility to provide equal access to academically qualified students with documented disabilities while maintaining standards that are essential to the academic program. A student with a disability is someone with either a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Temporary impairments of short duration without permanent impact usually do not qualify as disabilities under the ADA. Students are responsible for notifying the university of their need for accommodations, obtaining and submitting a Request for Accommodations Form to the Case Manager for Student Accessibility Services, providing supporting documentation in a timely manner, and actively participating in developing and implementing an accommodation plan for each term. As legal adults, students must self-advocate, and parents can be included in the process only with the student's permission.

Converse will make reasonable accommodations within its academic programs for "otherwise qualified" graduate students with documented disabilities. However, students should understand that accommodations provided in elementary and secondary schools under P.L. 94.142 (IDEA) are not necessarily required by law under the ADA or Section 504 or provided by Converse. Many of the practices and procedures of special education (goal-setting, progress reports, team meetings, program and exam modifications, related services, and annual reviews) have no parallels in higher education. Behavior standards are the same for all students. Converse does not provide transportation for students. Personal care attendants, orientation/mobility training and tutors are considered personal services in higher education and are the student's responsibility. Although Converse offers no specialized services for students with disabilities, equal access to services is offered to all students. Requests for course substitutions are evaluated individually, on the basis of documentation provided, but the university is not required to fundamentally alter essential course/program requirements. Testing to determine the need for accommodations is the student's responsibility and is not provided by Converse. IEPs or 504 plans do not automatically meet the documentation requirements for receiving accommodations in higher education. Documentation from an appropriate, licensed professional or agency is required in order to determine reasonable accommodations necessary to serve a student with a disability. Diagnostic evaluations or reports should be current, in most cases within three years, and should be sent directly from the qualified professional to the Case Manager of Student Accessibility Services. The documentation should indicate diagnosis, describe the manifestations of and the extent of the disability, and make recommendations for reasonable accommodations the professional deems necessary to assist the student with a disability in the university setting. A current comprehensive psycho-educational evaluation is required for learning disabilities and is strongly recommended for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Students should submit a completed Request for Accommodations Form with supporting documentation to the Case Manager of Student Accessibility Services at least thirty days working days prior to the first day of class in order to allow time for review and consultation, as needed, with the student, professors, counselors, psychological consultants, and the Director of Health Services, to prepare an appropriate accommodation plan, and to secure available support services and/or equipment. This deadline is for administrative purposes only and does not preclude admission to programs or services. In addition, the student is responsible for providing the Case Manager of Student Accessibility Services with a class schedule each term, so a new accommodation plan can be generated. All information and records regarding students with disabilities, including accommodations for them, are strictly confidential, and the Student Accessibility Services complies with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Records are stored in a secure location and reviewed only by authorized personnel.

Although the student's adviser and professors will receive a copy of the accommodation plan, it is the student's responsibility to discuss accommodations with each professor at the beginning of each term. If a student has concerns about or encounters problems with accommodations during the term, the student should contact the Case Manager of Student Accessibility Services, so accommodations may be appropriately adjusted. A student who is not satisfied with accommodations may contact either the ADA or Section 504 Compliance Officer indicated below and initiate the student grievance procedure as outlined in this handbook.

Any faculty member who receives a request for academic accommodations on the basis of disability must refer the request to the Case Manager of Student Accessibility Services immediately. No modification of the present program or promises of modification should be made until the Case Manager has made a recommendation. Questions or concerns regarding ADA compliance should be addressed to the Vice President for Finance & Administration at (864) 596-9031. Information on EEOC or Section 504 compliance issues can be obtained from the Director of Human Resources at (864) 596-9029.

**A. ADMISSIONS**

Students are admitted to Converse University Graduate School on the basis of meeting of the admission requirements of the specific degree program to which a student applies. These requirements always include a review of academic credentials and additional information submitted to the Graduate Admissions Office. Applicants are not required to disclose any disability on their applications for Graduate Admissions. However, once admitted, a graduate student seeking reasonable academic or physical accommodations for a disability should immediately contact the Case Manager of Student Accessibility Services to obtain an accommodation form.

**Converse University reserves the right in its sole discretion to rescind any notice of acceptance or admission of any incoming student at any time prior to matriculation.**

**B. RESOLUTION PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT COMPLAINTS ABOUT ADMISSIONS**

Graduate students who wish to file a complaint should do so by contacting the Office of the Graduate School which is located in Ezell 106 and can be contacted at (864)596-9220.